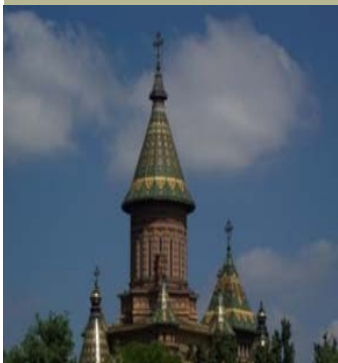




American Citizen Services eNewsletter

June 2012



2012 U.S. ELECTIONS

The 2012 U. S. election cycle is in full swing. We strongly encourage you to register to vote and request absentee ballots well in advance of elections to ensure that you receive all ballots for which you are eligible. In 2009, the Congress passed the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment or MOVE Act to simplify the absentee registration and voting process and increase access to voting materials electronically via the internet and email. We encourage you to use the Federal Voting Assistance Program website, www.fvap.gov, which has the forms and information most overseas voters need. The Overseas Vote Foundation (<http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org>) is a non-partisan voter advocacy organization.

Our most important message: If you want to vote, you have to send in a **Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)** to your local election officials every year – even if you’ve previously voted overseas – and every time you change your name, physical address, or email address. Use the FPCA to request an absentee ballot, and to register to vote if you’re not currently registered. The easiest way to fill out this form is to use the online tool available at www.fvap.gov which walks you through the process based on your state’s specific voting rules.

The fastest way to get you’re an absentee ballot is to request electronic ballot. Depending on the specific rules of your home state, delivery may be made by fax, email, or online download. You may request an electronic ballot delivery on the FPCA, but don’t forget to include your email address or fax number. Otherwise, your ballot will be mailed to you.

Most states now allow you to send the FPCA electronically to your local election officials, but others still require you to print and mail in a hard copy. The online tool at www.fvap.gov will tell you which method(s) your state permits.

All non-emergency ACS services (renewal of U.S. passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, notariats, etc.) are provided by appointment **ONLY**.

Please follow [this link](#) to make an appointment with our staff.

AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

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Tel: +40-21-270 6000

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In the event of an emergency involving an American citizen, please, call +40-21-200-3433

For information about public hours, please visit <http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/index.html>.





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All states now offer a way to verify registration. This is often done by an online verification website or by calling your local election officials. This helps confirm you are properly registered and on the list to get absentee ballots. www.fvap.gov provides a link to each state's online verification website.

Overseas voters are eligible to vote in presidential primary elections and in state primary elections for federal offices (Senator, Representative), as well as the general elections in November 2012. Some states allow overseas voters to vote in state and local elections. The online tool available through www.fvap.gov will let you know in which state and local elections you may vote.

States send out absentee ballots at least 30 days before the primary elections, and 45 days before the November general election. Returning your completed ballot as quickly as possible will ensure it reaches your local election officials before your state's ballot receipt deadline.

International mail to the United States may take two weeks. You can also drop off your FPCA or your completed ballot in person at the Embassy, and we'll mail it to the United States for you. Contact the Consular Section for instructions and hours of operation. Mail sent through the diplomatic pouch takes a week to get to Washington, and another week to reach most U.S. counties. For the pouch, use a postage-paid envelope (postage-paid envelope template available at www.fvap.gov), or affix U.S. postage. After you send in your completed ballot, you can confirm receipt by your local elections officials online by visiting the website of your state's Secretary of State.

If it's 30 days before Election Day, and you haven't received your ballot, fill out and mail in an emergency write-in ballot -- the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB), which is available at www.fvap.gov. You can also drop off your FWAB in person at the Embassy, and we'll mail it to the U.S. for you.

Frequently asked questions

Q: How soon can I send in my FPCA? Now?

A: We recommend sending in your FPCA on or after January 1st of each year, and every time you change your name, mailing address, or email address.

Q: I plan to vote absentee from abroad in the primary elections, but will be back in the United States for the November general elections? Do I have to do anything special?

A: When you fill out your FPCA, include a note to your local election officials that you'll be returning to the United States on xxx date. Once you are back home, contact your local election officials to confirm your new U.S. address and your intention to vote in the United States.

Q: I'm a U.S. citizen but I've never lived in the United States. Can I vote?

A: Each state has its own residency requirements relating to voter eligibility. Some states allow voters who have never lived in the United States to use their parents' state of voting residence. It's best to get in touch with local election officials in the place where your parents last lived, or the place where you have visited frequently, to find out if you are eligible to register to vote. FVAP's Voting Assistance Guide will have a section titled **Voting by Citizens Who Have Never Lived in the U.S.** if the state has passed laws allowing these citizens to vote. The Embassy voting assistance officer can help you get in touch with local election officials.

Q: I haven't lived in the United States for a long time, and don't know what our address was? Can I vote in any state? What do I do?

A: All voting in the United States is based on your residency. Normally, you'd use the address where you last lived before leaving the United States, even if it was a very long time ago. Someone in your family may have old letters which contain an address. You can also check medical, church, school, or property records, or write to the Social Security Administration.

Please contact us at ACSBucharest@state.gov if you have other questions.



Travel Alert

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Consular Affairs

Hurricane Typhoon Season 2012

June 04, 2012

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the hurricane and typhoon seasons in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommends that those in hurricane- and typhoon-prone regions begin preparations for the upcoming seasons now. This Travel Alert expires on December 1, 2012.

The Atlantic Basin, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico: Hurricane season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center expects to see a near-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic Basin this year with a 70 percent chance of nine to fifteen named storms, including four to eight that will reach hurricane strength (with top winds of 74 mph or higher). Of those, one to three will become major hurricanes (with top winds of 111 mph or higher, ranking Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

The Eastern Pacific: Hurricane season began May 15 and ends November 30. NOAA predicts a near-normal hurricane season in the Eastern Pacific this year with a 70 percent chance of 12 to 18 named storms, including five to nine that will reach hurricane strength. Of those, two to five are expected to become major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

Western and Central Pacific: Typhoon season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) predicts a 50 percent chance that activity during the 2012 season will be below normal in the Central Pacific basin. Each season the West and Central Pacific region averages 31 typhoons, about half of which have the potential to cause severe destruction. For information on typhoon warnings, please consult the [Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Honolulu](#), the [National Weather Service's Central Pacific Hurricane Center](#), and the [Regional Specialized Meteorological Center \(RSMC\) Tokyo - Typhoon Center](#).

In the aftermath of some previous storms, U.S. citizens traveling abroad encountered uncomfortable and often dangerous conditions that lasted for several days while they waited for transportation back to the United States. In the past, many U.S. citizens were forced to delay travel due to infrastructure damage to airports and limited flight availability. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris, adversely affecting access to airports and land routes out of affected areas. In many places, storms often are accompanied by damaging high tides and flooding. If you are living close to the ocean or other bodies of water, you may be at higher risk of flooding. Landslides and mudslides also are serious concerns during heavy rains. Reports of looting and sporadic violence in the aftermath of natural disasters are not uncommon. Security personnel may not be readily available to assist. In the event of a storm, travelers should be aware that they may not be able to depart the affected area for 24-48 hours or longer.

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If a situation requires an evacuation from an overseas location, the Department of State will work with commercial airlines to ensure that U.S. citizens are repatriated as safely and efficiently as possible. Commercial airlines are the Department's primary source of transportation in an evacuation; other means of transport are utilized only as a last resort. The Department of State does not provide no-cost transportation, but has the authority to provide repatriation loans to those in financial need. We recommend that you obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency.

If you live in or are traveling to storm-prone regions, prepare for hurricanes, typhoons, and other tropical storms by organizing a kit in a waterproof container that includes a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and vital documents (especially your passport and other identification). Emergency shelters often provide only very basic resources and may have limited medical and food supplies.

Monitor local radio and other media, and the National Weather Service to be aware of weather developments. Minor tropical storms can develop into hurricanes or typhoons very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Inform family and friends of your whereabouts and remain in close contact with your tour operator, hotel staff, transportation providers (airlines, cruise lines, etc.), and local officials for evacuation instructions during a weather emergency.

We strongly encourage U.S. citizens to enroll with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) website. By enrolling, you will receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during your trip. Enrollment also ensures that you can be reached during an emergency. While we will do our utmost to assist you in a crisis, be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions.

Additional information on hurricanes and storm preparedness can be found on the Department's "[Hurricane Season - Know Before You Go](#)" webpage. You can get updated information on travel to your destination from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada or, from outside the United States and Canada, 1-202-501-4444. We also encourage you to check the [Country Specific Information Sheet](#) and the [Internet site of the U.S. embassy or consulate](#) with consular responsibilities for the country you will be visiting. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and become a fan of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' page on [Facebook](#) as well.



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[Travel Alerts](#)
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WE REMIND YOU...

... that we **cannot** authenticate U.S. documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, death certificates, etc. Under the [Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents](#), an *Apostille* by a U.S. clerk of court or a State Secretary of State certifies the authenticity of a U.S. document.

Please note that we **cannot** authenticate any academic credentials either.

A document is generally recognized only in the country in which it was issued. In order to facilitate recognition of a document abroad, an international treaty regarding mutual recognition of documents was signed by many countries, including the U.S. and Romania.

This treaty is called the "Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirements of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents." According to that treaty, a document originating in one Convention country is recognized in all other Convention countries if it bears the so-called "APOSTILLE" stamp, which is a validation performed by the superior office in the country and state (province) where it was issued.

In the United States, the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State of the individual U.S. States provide the "Apostille".

Sample of an Apostille

APOSTILLE (Convention de LaHaye du 5 octobre 1961)	
1. Country:.....	
This public document.....	
2. has been signed by.....	
3. acting in the capacity of.....	
4. bears the seal/stamp of.....	
.....	
Certified	
5. at.....	6. the.....
7. by.....	
8. No.....	
9. Seal/Stamp: 10. Signature:	

If you need an Apostille please contact the State where the document was originally issued. You will need to submit the original document with a request to have the Apostille attached. The easiest way to obtain up to date information is to go into any search engine and enter the word Apostille and the state. You will obtain various options how to order the Apostille.

More information about the Apostille and the Hague Convention is available at the following website — http://travel.state.gov/law/judicial/judicial_2545.html.

Have a question about visiting or living overseas? Check out these links and find answers to your questions!

[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)
[Road Safety Overseas](#)
[Death Abroad](#)
[Forced Marriages](#)
[Emergency Information](#)
[Overseas Security Advisory Council](#)
[Diplomatic Security Releases](#)
[Help for American Victims of Crime Overseas](#)
[State Department Security Training Seminars for the Public](#)

The Embassy will be closed on July 4, August 15, September 3, October 8, November 12, November 22, December 25 and December 26 in observance of U.S. and Romanian official holidays and for administrative reasons.

Planning a trip? Visit www.travel.state.gov and learn about current travel warnings, travel alerts, country specific information, and more!

Did you know...?

... that experts report that cyber criminals may use children's games to upload malware and steal bank account information. Many of these games may appear innocent to a child, but in fact, have "backdoor applications that surrender control of the machine to hackers looking to steal sensitive data." Be sure you know what games your children play. What can you do?

- Dedicate an inexpensive new computer exclusively for your young child's use*
- Set up a user account on the computer that limits permissions*
- Monitor what your children do online*
- Visit the Cyber Security Awareness website or Stay Smart Online to learn more - <https://intranet.ds.state.sbu/DS/SI/CS/Awareness1/Content/Kids.aspx> and <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/>*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

My friend plans to visit me in Romania. She will need to bring some medication with her for her existing medical condition. Can she do that?

Yes, but **please keep reading**. A US citizen traveling to Romania with a preexisting medical problem should carry a prescription or a letter from the attending physician, describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Any medications being carried overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled.

A reasonable supply of medicines for personal use may be brought into the country in hand luggage. If you are planning to order medicines by mail, you should be aware that postal offices will only release the medicines to you upon presentation of a prescription issued less than six months prior. Please inquire about prohibited items in Romania before placing your order. Among the prohibited items are *human plasma, plasma derivatives, psychopharmaceuticals (psychotropics) and narcotics*.

Information on filling a prescription abroad and other health issues may be found at [Medical Information for Americans Abroad](#).

If you have any questions or require additional clarification of this process, please, email us at ACSBucharest@state.gov.

